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REVIEW.

It is of the first moment, in all matters and questions of controversy, that there should be an agreement between those taking opposite sides as to the meaning of the terms used, and as to the precise points in question, else confusion must ensue. Difference also may seem to exist where in substance and reality agreement would be found, if each clearly and fully understood the other. Anxiously desiring to attain this end, I shall signify my dissent from the use of expressions and phrases in senses I do not accept; defining at the same time the sense which I consider proper to either. Thus when, in the opening of his "*Plea*," the Bishop says, with reference to our Church's teaching on Infant Baptism, as expressed in Art. xxvii.—

"That 'the baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ,' it leaves no doubt as to the fact that it has decided upon retaining the usage of Infant Baptism; but it does not express with the same clearness the grounds of its decision. I do not find it easy, indeed, to state precisely even to myself what is meant by *most agreeable with the institution of Christ*. It sounds like an assertion that the practice was instituted by Christ Himself; but it does not assert this, and it seems hard to doubt that it stops short of doing so designedly."

—I take exception to this statement. The difference between "the institution of Christ" and that which is "most agreeable with the institution of Christ" seems to me sufficiently obvious. To affirm of any practice or usage that it is "most agreeable with the institution of Christ," is to distinguish that practice or usage

from the institution of Christ, as plainly as anything is distinguished from another with which it is compared—as being most agreeable with it—but whereof identity is not affirmed. Or, as when a part harmonizes with a whole, and is thence inferred presumptively (in the absence of direct and positive evidence) to be part of the whole—so, the Baptism of Infants corresponding in the New Covenant with the Circumcision of Infants under the First Covenant, is thence inferred (in the absence of most plain warrants of Holy Scripture) to be part of the New Covenant, and “in anywise to be retained in the Church as most agreeable with the institution of Christ.” Therefore, our Reformers, in using this definition respecting Infant Baptism, *did* stop short of affirming it to be the institution of Christ, and did so, as I believe, *designedly*.

Again, when the Bishop says—

“But whatever were their (our Reformers’) belief, individually, of the doctrine, it seems plain that they were not prepared to give it a place among the Articles of Religion, containing only principles of the Church which may be so proved by *most certain warrants* of Holy Scripture, that it is reasonable and right to require all the ministers of the Church publicly to profess their belief in them, and to conform their teaching to them.”

And again—

“There can be no doubt, as a matter of fact, that the Article has been generally, if not universally, understood to leave this question an open one.”

I lay an emphasis on these admissions and on the distinction before noticed, as not to be forgotten in the after treatment of this question.

The Bishop then proceeds—

“Exercising the liberty thus left to them, the ministers and members of the Church have been extensively divided upon this question—some holding that the usage is of Divine appointment; others, that it is not; and others, that there is no sufficient ground in Scripture for affirming or denying that it is.”

Before proceeding further, I call attention to the phrase “*of Divine appointment*,” as admitting of distinction from “*The institution of Christ*.” An ordinance may be “*of Divine appointment*”

and yet not be "the institution of Christ," though, of course, whatever is "the institution of Christ" must be of Divine appointment. The Sabbath and Circumcision are instances and examples of the one, both being of Divine appointment. The Lord's Supper is an instance and illustration of the other, *i. e.*, the institution of Christ. This distinction should be observed and borne in mind, because the Bishop undertakes to prove that Infant Baptism is the institution of Christ, which, failing to do, the basis of the whole superstructure of his argument is seriously disturbed, not to say more.*

The Bishop having resolved the parties embraced within the bosom of the Church through the liberty allowed by the xxviii Article, into *three*, as before described, proceeds to weigh the grounds on which *two* of these parties rest their convictions and conclusions. The two parties selected are—The first, who hold the usage to be of Divine appointment, and the third, who think "that there is no sufficient ground in Scripture for affirming or denying that it is."

Having stated the grounds on which each of these parties rests its conclusions, and endeavouring to hold the balance justly between both, the Bishop decides that up to a certain stage in the argument the scales incline to neither side, that the negative

* NOTE.—To show that I do not mistake the fact, *viz.* : that the Bishop undertakes to prove Infant Baptism to be, not alone of Divine appointment, but the institution of Christ, and that he rests the weight of his conclusions on this foundation, which he assumes as proven, I refer the reader to two paragraphs in his pamphlet or Plea—1st, the paragraph, p. 19, beginning with the words, "But however interesting and fruitful," &c., and 2nd, the paragraph, p. 28, beginning with the words, "And this would be a reasonable justification of their unbelief."

If the practice could be satisfactorily shown to be apostolic, it might thence be truly said to be of *Divine appointment*, the apostles being inspired by the Holy Spirit. But this should still be short of establishing the fact, that it was the institution of Christ Himself, *i. e.* "ordained by Christ Himself." The transfer of the Sabbath from the last day of the week to the first, or the noncircumcision of Gentile converts, may serve in illustration of this. The Bishop passes, without any notice of the distinction, from the former to the latter, in his paragraph, p. 6, beginning with the words, "I have said enough," &c.

is as strong as the positive—that the Scriptures advanced in favour of Infant Baptism, “furnish no warrant for it—that it is not commanded either directly or by any fair implication in any or all the passages referred to.” And to this the Bishop subscribes, saying, “And this, I think, can hardly be denied so long as we look only at the passages in question.”

I have thus represented the case fairly, I believe, as put by the Bishop.

But there is an element in reserve, which, like the sword of Brennus, when cast into the scale, decides the issue. Well, not disputing this, yea, even admitting that the element in reserve when brought into the field decides the controversy, may we not now affirm, on the Bishop's own testimony, that until this reserve appears, until the foreign element is cast into the scale, the Scriptures alone, without this addition, “furnish no warrant” for Infant Baptism—“that it is not commanded either directly or by any fair implication in any or all the passages referred to”?

I presume it will be said, “But we cannot divest the argument of an element inherent in it, or to it.”

Well, what is the element? Thus the Bishop states it:—

“And this I think can hardly be denied so long as we look only at the language of the passages in question. But we are constrained to take a very different view of their force and meaning, when we consider the circumstances under which they were spoken. For they were all—the Lord's command, and the Apostle's exhortation and declaration—addressed to *Jews*. Now, not only were the Jews in covenant with God themselves, but so also were their children. They had themselves been brought into covenant with Him in their infancy, and so had their children; and both by the same rite. And this was done by God's commandment given at the first institution of the covenant.”

What then?—what of this?

Why, that as *Jews*, who were accustomed to circumcise infants, they would baptize infants; as Jews, who were accustomed and commanded by God to imprint the initiatory rite of the first covenant on infants, they would undoubtedly administer the initiatory rite of the new covenant to infants; that as Jews they would not only do so, without any special command to do it, but they would do so, if not specially commanded not to do it. That in

fact the absence of any command to baptize infants was more than a negative proof ; it was a positive proof in favour of infant baptism. Wherefore the command to baptize, as the initiatory rite of the new covenant given by Christ was, when addressed to Jews, a positive command to baptize infants.

Thus it appears, as the Bishop argues—

1. That Christ gave no commandment respecting Infant Baptism, such being unnecessary.

2. That the *Jew* (not only without any commandment, but unless commanded not to do so,) would certainly baptize his infant, believing that the initiatory rite of the new covenant should be extended to the infant of the faithful, as had been that of the first covenant, by express command of God.

This unquestionably is an argument favourable to Infant Baptism.

But as unquestionably is it, if accepted as fact, *fatal* to the Bishop's assumption, that Christ commanded infants to be baptized.

According to this, Infant Baptism is a deduction by analogy from the Jewish covenant, and not obedience to any express command of Christ.

Having now allowed the Bishop the full value of all that is to be derived in favour of infant baptism, from the fact that the command of Christ, and the words of the Apostle, were addressed to *Jews*, may I not reasonably express surprise on reading the following paragraph?—

“I find it necessary to note here, in the way of precaution, that I have not attempted to argue, from analogy, between circumcision and baptism, as the initiatory rites of their respective dispensations ; that as the former was administered to infants, by Divine appointment, we may infer that there was the like appointment with respect to baptism.”

If the Bishop would here take his stand on, or behind, the words—“there was the like appointment,” I must say—(and I ask forgiveness if I misconceive his words)—such would be an evasion. Analogy does not require that there should be “the like appointment.” The features of similitude, which form the

bases of analogy, are these—in each case God made a covenant with His people ; and to each covenant He appointed or enjoined an initiatory rite. And the initiatory rite of one covenant having been, by His command, impressed on infants, analogy would lead us to conclude that the initiatory rite of the other covenant, which succeeded and superseded the former, should be, without any express command, imparted to infants. This is analogy ; and I leave his readers to judge if the Bishop has not argued from this. One passage only, from what he has said, I will add, and close this part of the argument :—

“In the dispensation under which they had been born and were living, children were brought into covenant with God in infancy, by what He had Himself appointed as the initiatory rite of the covenant. And when He established a new covenant with a new initiatory rite, and commanded that the benefits of this covenant should be offered to all, and that all who accepted it should be brought into it by that rite, was it possible that they to whom the command was given could have any doubt that the rite was to be administered to children—infants included—as well as to their parents ?”

Most of his readers will consider this to be an argument from analogy, and, without analogy, I know not on what foundation he builds his argument in favour of the Divine appointment or institution of infant baptism.

It is true that, by repudiating analogy, he would relieve himself from some objections, troublesome and inconvenient to answer ; two of which he is tempted to take up. But I am not concerned to follow him in these farther than to observe, that they alone are sufficient to prove that no positive instructions had been given respecting the administration of the ordinance.

What, then, is the sum and conclusion of the bishop's argument on the proposition which he has undertaken to prove ? Let his own words answer :—

“But however interesting and fruitful this point is, I must remember that I have only brought the two rites together, as a part of the proof that the Baptism of Infants was of Divine appointment, no less than the circumcision of infants”—(take away this part of his proof, and what remains of it ?)—“I have taken what will appear to many, probably to most persons, to be very disproportionate pains to establish this point.” (Certainly not, if we consider how long and how much this has engaged the Church's thoughts—or where

our own Church, in the end, has left it—"an open question" confessedly.) "But, whatever place it may have, or whether it finds any place at all, or not, among the reasons on which the belief of others in the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration rests, it lies at the very foundation of the only argument which has ever brought conviction to my mind of the truth of that doctrine. *And this foundation being now, as I hope, securely laid, I may go on.*"

I suppose the Bishop means—"this *part* of the foundation"—for, certainly, it is not *the whole* foundation, nor, in my judgment, the chief part of that foundation, on which baptismal regeneration is made to rest. But, as regards this part of the foundation, has the Bishop laid it one whit more deeply, broadly, or securely than it has been many times laid already? Has he contributed the least measure or degree of evidence hitherto unknown—or any argument new to the Church of God? Has he mentioned or adduced anything which we may not suppose to have been present to the minds of our Reformers? Has he raised this doctrine, received by our Church as "most agreeable with the institution of Christ," one infinitesimal degree above the platform on which it already stands, and did stand, before he took the question in hand?

I submit he has not—no, not a thought; nay, in my judgment, he has not exhausted the proofs adducible on the side of Infant Baptism; nor some which, I believe, weighed much with the Reformers, who yet did not place it among Articles which may be *proved, by most certain warrants* of Holy Scripture—therefore I see no reason why the Bishop should so confidently affirm that he has laid this part of his foundation "securely," or, as he afterwards states, proved it by *most certain warrants of Holy Scripture*, (pp. 30, 31.)

So much for the former part of the Bishop's "Plea."

And now I come to the second proposition which he undertakes to prove, which also is the more grave part of his pamphlet, and involves issues far more serious and vital.

The Bishop thus proceeds:—

"All who believe Baptism to be a sacrament must believe that what is outward and visible in the rite is connected with something inward and invisible—that what is material is connected with something spiritual—not merely as an outward sign, but as an *effectual* sign thereof; that is, a sign by which or

through which, as the channel, means, or instrument (whether sole or concurrent), these inward and spiritual effects are wrought."

Here I pause, in limine, that the ground of controversy may be clear, and the points at issue fairly visible. The Bishop's definition, as might be expected, is carefully worded. It seems abundantly and superabundantly particular so as to embrace every possible aspect under which a sacrament may be regarded; and yet it is, in my judgment, insufficient or illusive. If by "is connected" is meant "*inseparably* connected," the definition is insufficient; for it does not fully express what the Bishop would then hold to belong *essentially* to the nature of a sacrament. But if by "is connected" is not meant "*inseparably* connected," save under one or other of the conditions supposed in the parenthesis "(whether sole or concurrent,)" the definition is, in my judgment, illusive, seeming to embrace under it opinions which essentially differ from it.

And now let me establish my position. Such as hold the outward and visible sign to be the "concurrent" instrument, through which the inward and spiritual grace is wrought, must believe that there are conditions required to make the outward and visible sign effectual; and that these conditions must be present and *concurrent* with the outward and visible sign, else the sacrament is not complete, nor the sign effectual. The Bishop's definition does not make this evident, for which I object to it as insufficient.

Again. Such as hold the outward and visible sign to be the "*sole*" instrument (if by this is meant that it acts by itself alone)* through which the inward and spiritual grace is wrought,

* I may have misinterpreted the Bishop's meaning in the use of the words "(sole or concurrent)"—and possibly I have done so—as occurs to me after much reflection. If I have done so, my misapprehension was unintentional, and not unlikely to be common. I therefore, on this supposition, object to his statement on the ground of obscurity. And I proceed to observe that immediately after the proposition is stated, an application is made of it precisely in the form in which I understood it, and developing an element which I believed to be latent in it.

Having stated the connection said to exist between the outward and visible sign and the inward and spiritual grace, the Bishop proceeds—"And

must believe that the performance of the outward form or act, *of itself* ALONE, conveys the grace—a doctrine from which many would shrink if they so understood the Bishop's definition—for this is the teaching of the Church of Rome, pure and simple—the doctrine known by the phrase of the *opus operatum*. It is on this ground I account the Bishop's definition to be illusive, that is, calculated to mislead an unwary reader.

After the foregoing statement respecting the connection between the outward and visible sign in the sacrament, and the inward and spiritual grace, the Bishop proceeds :—

“And when once it is established that it is by Divine appointment that infants are baptized, it must be felt very hard, I think, to believe that the reception of the rite brings no spiritual benefit to them.”

Thus the half-suppressed element in the foregoing definition is cautiously developed; seeing that the outward and visible sign must be effectual as a means or instrument, sole or concurrent, in working the inward and spiritual grace, if there be any instance wherein it is the sole instrument, what other can that be than in the case of baptized *infants*? And when once it is proved or admitted that infant baptism is of Divine appointment, it follows almost as a necessary sequence that all baptized children are regenerate, or in the words of the Bishop, “it must be felt very hard, I think, to believe that the reception of the rite brings no spiritual benefit to them.”

The measure and extent of the benefits received by infants through the ordinance, as admitted even by those “disposed to

when once it is established that it is by Divine appointment that infants are baptized, it must be felt very hard, I think, to believe that the reception of the rite brings no spiritual benefit to them.”

Upon what interpretation of the antecedent definition—setting forth the connection between the outward, visible sign and the inward, spiritual grace—should we infer that the reception of the sign assuredly conveys the grace to infants—save on the belief that the outward sign (sole), of itself alone, could work that inward and spiritual grace? And that, if any cases possibly exist of such effects wrought by the sign (sole), infants must surely be such?

I am content, therefore, to let what I have written stand, seeing that results are the same, whether my interpretation be correct or not.

ascribe least to baptism," are then discussed by the Bishop; the question of qualifications or conditions, on the part of infants, is rather evaded than answered; and another, that of their capability of *receiving* grace, taken up. This latter is discussed somewhat at length, with a view of showing that infants are as capable as adults of the reception of those graces "which may be received passively," viz.—grace in the germ, grace in the incipient form, grace in embryo, to be developed in after-life, "in full accordance with the corresponding truth with regard to our natural powers."

As in the natural man all the natural powers are found in mental and physical embryo in the new-born babe, to be unfolded and developed in the full-grown man: so in the spiritual and regenerate man, all the germs of the future being of the renewed soul are laid in embryo at the new birth, to be afterwards developed in the matured spiritual man.

I neither dispute the fact, nor object to the illustration. The point at issue is this:—Whether this new birth, which without controversy is very wonderful, takes place at the baptism of every infant, and is wrought by the reception of the outward and visible sign, as the sole means and instrument of this mysterious and marvellous change—and whether there and then, by this sole instrument, the infant, having been already born of corruptible seed, is now born again or anew, "not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."

There is a step lacking in the Bishop's argument before this conclusion can be reached; a step, the indispensable need of which he himself feels, and which accordingly he next sets himself to supply. Thus—

"But it will probably be asked, what authority have we for believing that any such connexion exists between the new birth and baptism? I think that it may be said, with reverence, that we have the authority of the Blessed Lord Himself. I do not mean, that He states in express terms that this is the case, but I think it follows, and necessarily, from what He does expressly state."

Here the Bishop avails himself of the widest limit allowed by our Rule of Faith, which lays down, "that whatsoever is not

read" in the Holy Scriptures, "nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an Article of the Faith," &c.

The Bishop cannot say that his proposition is to be "read in" the Holy Scriptures—*Our Lord does not state it in express terms.* And I suppose it is not elsewhere to be found in Holy Scripture in express terms; that is, it is not to "be read therein."

But if "proved thereby," it is equally binding as an Article of Faith. Our Article admits this, and we cordially accept it. The proof, however, must be satisfactory and conclusive.

We expect, then, the Bishop's proof; and if sustained by the voice of Revelation, more especially by the words of our Lord Himself, we will surely bow submissively, and accept obediently the word of truth.

What, then, is the proof? It is found in the conversation of our Lord with Nicodemus, wherein He affirms, that "except a man be born again, or anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God," and repeats this in the altered form, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

This latter, says the Bishop, is an explanation of the former, as it is impossible to doubt; and equally impossible to doubt that "*being born of water and of the Spirit*" is to be understood of baptism, described by its two essential parts, the outward and material, and the inward and spiritual."

Are we prepared now to accept this as sufficient proof of the connexion between the outward visible sign in baptism, and the inward and spiritual grace? Yet more, of the *necessary* connexion between the sign and the thing signified?

Two conditions must be satisfied before the conclusion can be granted.

First. That our Lord in this conversation had respect to baptism, the initiatory rite of the new covenant.

And secondly. That our Lord intended to teach that the outward and visible sign therein is necessarily joined with the inward and spiritual grace.

The former condition—namely, that our Lord, in these words addressed to the Jewish Ruler, had respect to the initiatory rite

of the Christian Dispensation—is not only questioned, but, I think, very questionable. It is very unlike our Lord's wonted manner to have met an inquirer after His person, and mission, and doctrine, with the announcement that he must submit to Christian Baptism before he can understand these. And next, when the Jewish Ruler expresses surprise on hearing the announcement, it seems scarcely appropriate for our Lord to say, "Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?" What could he, though a master in Israel, have been reasonably expected to know of the initiatory rite of the New Dispensation? There is another interpretation of the passage which accords better with the analogy of Scripture. St. Paul says, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." A spiritual nature, born of the Spirit, is therefore necessary to the apprehension of the things of that kingdom about which Nicodemus came to inquire. The Jewish Rabbi expresses surprise at this announcement—then our Lord answers, "Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?" Surely a master in Israel should and ought to have known such things as the promises of the Spirit shadowed forth continually under the image of water. "I will pour water on him that is thirsty, and floods on the dry ground. I will pour my Spirit on thy seed, and my blessing on thine offspring." "Then shall I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." "A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you," &c. And as the fruit and effect of this promise to be fulfilled in Gospel times—in the days when the King should reign, then "the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken"—all which should have been familiar, indeed, to a master in Israel, while of the sacrament of Baptism as an initiatory rite of the New and Christian Dispensation, what could he have known? Therefore, also, did our Lord still further remonstrate with him for his spiritual dulness, saying—"If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not; how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things?" "If unable and unprepared to receive the first principles of Gospel truth—wherefore should

I reveal the deeper things—‘the mysteries of the kingdom of God?’—But I am carried beyond my intention, entering so largely upon this subject.—To return, then, to the argument of the “Plea.”

The Bishop pleads authority for his own interpretation of the passage, saying, “It is thus that our Church interprets the Lord’s words, as appears by the first exhortation in the Baptismal Service, both that for infants and that for such as are of riper years.” To which I answer—Our Church introduces our Lord’s solemn words, on both occasions, to impress on all the hearers the necessity of that spiritual change, indispensable to an apprehension of spiritual things, or an entrance into the kingdom of God, whether now or hereafter. But not as teaching that the outward and visible sign (which was then about to be administered) either was that change, or could of itself effect that change—or was more than the outward and visible sign of what must be inwardly wrought by the Spirit of God. It might have been before, (as in the case of Cornelius and his friends, and also in that of the eunuch,) or it might be in and through it (as possibly in the case of Saul of Tarsus, to whom it was said, “Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord,”) or, it may be after it, as in the case of many who have been baptized in infancy, though not regenerated until in after days the Spirit of the Lord descends upon them and renews them.

I have not yet, however, done with the Bishop’s argument here—since he introduces Hooker, and, through him, the testimony of all ancient authority as confirming his view of this passage.

I place over against this the testimony of one older than Hooker, and as thoroughly acquainted with the teaching of antiquity as he was. Calvin says, “Chrysostom, with whom the greater part of expounders agree, makes the word *water* to refer to Baptism. The meaning would then be that by Baptism we enter into the kingdom of God, because by Baptism we are regenerated by the Spirit of God. Hence arose the belief of the absolute necessity of Baptism in order to the hope of eternal life. But, though we were to admit that Christ here speaks of Baptism, yet we ought not to press His words so closely as to imagine that

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He confines salvation to the outward sign ; but, on the contrary, He connects *water* with the *Spirit*, because under that visible symbol He attests and seals that newness of life which God alone produces in us by His Spirit. It is true that by neglecting Baptism, we are excluded from salvation ; and in this sense I acknowledge that it is necessary ; but it is absurd to speak of the hope of salvation as confined to the sign. So far as relates to this passage, I cannot bring myself to believe that Christ speaks of Baptism, for it would have been inappropriate.”—Calvin *in loco*.

These words of a theologian not to be despised as a commentator, are a sufficient answer to the Bishop’s remark—“ Looking at what He (our Lord) says in its connection, I think it is impossible to doubt that *being born of water and of the Spirit* is the explanation of what He intends by being born from above. And it is, I think, equally impossible to doubt that *being born of water and of the Spirit* is to be understood of Baptism.”

Calvin did doubt it. Therefore it is not impossible to doubt it.

I have adduced one instance only, being a representative one, merely to show that the interpretation of the third of John adopted by the Bishop is not unquestionable. I would not attach more weight to the judgment of Calvin than to that of Hooker, if unsupported, as I believe, by the tenor of the written Word. I shall have occasion presently to show that the Bishop is at variance with Hooker on a point as essential to his conclusion as that just discussed.

Allowing, however, for the present the Bishop’s interpretation of the conversation of our Lord with Nicodemus in the third of John, and that by the words “ born of water and of the Spirit ” we are to understand Baptism as defined by the outward, visible sign, and the inward and spiritual grace, both these parts being essential to the sacrament, and both *generally* necessary to salvation. If these two parts had been so joined together that they could not be sundered, then we must conclude that both are *absolutely* necessary to salvation. But it is admitted on all sides, indeed it could not be questioned, that in adult baptism the outward and visible sign may be administered without the inward

and spiritual grace accompanying it, as in the case of Simon Magus. This follows from conditions being required, in order to adult baptism, as appears from the reply of Philip to the eunuch, when he asked him, saying, "See, here is water : what doth hinder me to be baptized?" "If thou believest with all thine heart," answered Philip, "thou mayest."

No doubt or question therefore arises about conditions being required in order to adult baptism. It is with reference to infant baptism that the controversy exists ; and herein it is that the Bishop, by a process of reasoning, has been led to think differently from what he once had done ; and to say that in his belief there is, and can be, no severance of the two parts of the sacrament in infant baptism. His reasons for thus thinking, and the steps by which he has reached this conclusion, must be stated by himself.

Taking the third of John to refer to Christian baptism, he says—

"If this be the case, we appear fully warranted in stating that we have the Lord's *own authority for assuming* that it is in *baptism* that the new birth takes place—the birth from above—the spiritual birth from which the spirit that is born of the Spirit proceeds."

And then immediately he adds :—

"Doubtless, it will be said that this may be admitted, when baptism is rightly administered and rightly received—that is, when it is administered to a penitent and believing adult ; but how can it be maintained that the same is true when the recipient neither does nor can repent or believe?"

This latter is the case of the infant ; and we have need to attend to every step, or link in the chain, of argument here. Thus he proceeds :—

"This would be an embarrassing question, if we had not been satisfied that the usage of infant baptism is of divine institution. When the Lord, who has connected various benefits with baptism, requires for the full attainment of them repentance and faith in the recipient, we might seem fairly warranted in concluding that He did not intend that infants, who cannot repent or believe, should receive baptism."

Before proceeding further in this paragraph, I ask—Is such a conclusion warranted by the comparison already instituted between the initiatory rites of the two covenants, Circumcision and

Baptism? (whence also, and alone, the Divine institution of Infant Baptism can be inferred.) From St. Paul's definition of Circumcision as *the "seal of the righteousness of the faith, which he had, yet being uncircumcised,"* it might with equal cogency have been concluded that God could not intend that infants, who could not believe, should receive circumcision. But God commanded, saying, "He that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you." Wherefore such mode of argument is inconclusive, and the inference of the Bishop unwarranted. To proceed, however, with the Bishop's argument :—

"But when we learn that this is not the case, and that it is His will that infants shall be baptized, then it appears that the right inference is that, in their case, *the conditions, that they cannot fulfil, are dispensed with.*"

This, I believe, is not consistent with what is taught in our Church Catechism.

"Why, then, are infants baptized, when by reason of their tender age they cannot perform them?"—that is, *the conditions* of repentance and faith. To which it is answered, "Because they promise them both"—repentance and faith—"by their sureties, which promise, when they come to age, themselves are bound to perform."

Accordingly, when infants are presented for baptism, these conditions are demanded in their name, and on their behalf, from the sponsors, or sureties : thus—

"Dost thou, in the name of this child, renounce the devil and all his works?"

"Dost thou believe all the articles of the Christian faith?"

"Wilt thou keep God's holy will and commandments?" &c.

All these the infant, speaking through his sponsors, then and there promises and engages, or rather affirms that he does.

And on this confession is the infant baptized.

What is the meaning of all this if, as the Bishop asserts, "*the conditions, they cannot fulfil, are dispensed with*"? Can these two statements be reconciled?

The Church of Rome teaches that sacraments confer grace on all who put no bar in the way of the grace—which has special respect to infant baptism; whence it follows that every infant

baptized is regenerated. I see no distinction between this and the Bishop's doctrine ; nor any difference in their results, as the Bishop freely and fully states those of his own : thus—

“ If I might judge of others by myself, I should say, that for those who believe infant baptism is of divine appointment, it would be very difficult to believe that in the case of infants such a severance of the parts of the sacrament can take place as would leave *any infant* who receives the outward part, without any of the benefits of the inward part thereof.”

This seems conclusive as to the identity of both systems.

Refuge from the inference stated above as to the conditions of baptism, is sometimes sought in an appeal to our own Form of Private Infant Baptism, wherein no sponsors are required. This, however, will not yield those who avail themselves of it the shelter which they seek ; for—

In the first place, this is a case of exigency, to be had recourse to only as such, in apprehension of death, or of danger by exposure from public baptism, and to be followed, if life is prolonged, by presentation of the same infant in the congregation, before whom profession of faith is then made.

But again, and before the admission of the infant to baptism, is the consideration of the parents' faith ; which is an essential condition ; for all infants are not entitled to this grace, the infants of such only as are in covenant with God are entitled to the seal of the covenant ; as it was with the seed of Abraham, and as the Apostle testifieth, saying, “ For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the (believing) wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband ; else were your children unclean, but now are they holy.”

Wherefore the infant is baptized in contemplation of the parents' faith.

Now, although God vouchsafes this grace to those in covenant with Himself, He does not therefore bind Himself to bestow the grace of His Holy Spirit on all who receive the outward and visible sign. So that it follows not, that because an infant is outwardly baptized, he is also, and as a necessary consequence, baptized with the Holy Ghost ; as the Bishop would teach.

And here it is that I will take advantage of the Bishop's appeal

to Hooker, and adduce his testimony on this point. Thus Hooker writes :—

“For we are plainly taught of God that the seed of faithful parentage is holy from the very birth. Which albeit we may not so understand, as if the children of believing parents were without sin ; or grace from baptized parents derived by propagation ; or *God, by covenant and promise, tied to save any*, in mere regard of their parents' belief ; yet seeing, that to all professors of the name of Christ, this pre-eminence above infidels is freely given, that the fruit of their bodies bringeth into the world with it a *present interest and right to those means* wherewith the ordinance of Christ is that His Church shall be sanctified, it is not to be thought that He which, as it were from heaven, hath nominated and designed them unto holiness by special privilege of their very birth, will Himself deprive them of regeneration and inward grace, only because necessity depriveth them of the outward sacrament.”

And with reference to the same he says in the beginning of the same paragraph :—

“But yet seeing *grace is not absolutely tied unto sacraments.*”

Whence it follows that Hooker held that grace might be had without the sacraments ; *a fortiori*, the sacraments might be had (in the outward and visible sign,) without the grace ; for “*grace is not absolutely tied unto sacraments.*”

The Bishop next canvasses the grounds upon which many reject his view of infant baptism, viz. :—that the inward and spiritual grace always accompanies the reception of the outward and visible sign.

“I cannot help thinking then,” he says, “that one great hindrance to our admitting the spiritual effects of baptism arises from the common, I might say universal, disposition to judge by *sight* rather than by *faith*.”

Two instances are cited by the Bishop in illustration of this :—

1. The first, wherein the means are regarded as inadequate to produce the effects assigned to them. That water sprinkled with a form of words, and by a minister not much esteemed, could be accompanied by such a wonderful result as the regeneration of the infant by the Holy Ghost. But the Bishop says—

“When it is remembered that the rite was instituted by the Blessed Lord Himself ; that it is by His command that it is administered ; that it was by Him the use of water was prescribed ; and that it was by Him that the words uttered by the minister were dictated. When this is remembered, can it be thought

reasonable to regulate our belief in the effects of baptism, by the natural effects of water or of words; or by the gifts and graces of the minister; or by the limits of human power? Surely in the giving or withholding our belief on such grounds, we are judging by *sight* and not by faith."

But will the premises here sustain the conclusion? Has the Blessed Lord promised that *the use of the means should always be accompanied with these results*, even in the case of infants?—Here is the missing link in the chain of argument, fatal to the conclusion. *Faith* demands the production of that link, else has it nothing to rest on.

Is there not something necessary, in addition to the use of all outward means, to give efficacy to these means? "This people," says our Lord, "draw nigh unto me with their mouth, and honour me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." And again it is written—"He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh." There is nothing said of baptism, which could not be said also, and with more Scriptural authority, of circumcision—the corresponding initiatory rite, which also was administered to infants; nevertheless, all who received the outward rite did not receive the inward grace.

2. A second instance is adduced by the Bishop, of the propensity to judge by sight rather than by faith.

It is this—that when in after life very many, I think we may without any exaggeration say, the great majority of those baptized in infancy show no evidence of regeneration, yea, even more, "clear indications of a moral or spiritual state, which seems incompatible with its existence."—In such cases the Bishop represents the objectors as saying—

"Have we not reason to withhold our belief in the existence of a living principle, which gives no evidence, no sign of its existence? Nay more, Are we not warranted in going farther, and disbelieving that it does exist?"

I should be disposed to cast in my lot with the objectors in such cases, and to say—"I think them fully warranted in so doing."

But so strong is the Bishop's conviction of the incontrovertible truth of his own views, viz.—that regeneration certainly takes

place in every infant baptized, that he would account me an offender for thus judging by *sight* rather than by *faith*. I *ought to believe* that regeneration had taken place at the baptism of such persons in infancy, although all appearances now contradict it.

I do not think our Blessed Lord taught His followers thus, especially when saying to them, "Ye shall know them by their fruits; do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit; therefore by their fruits ye shall know them." And His servant John said or wrote, "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." (1 John iii. 7-9.)

It was not until "the blade was sprung up and brought forth fruit," that the tares were distinguished from the wheat—"Then appeared the tares also." And I do not think the servants were rebuked for observing the distinction. Would it not seem strange enough to charge them with judging by *sight* rather than by *faith*? Nay more, and to pursue the inquiry and illustration further—Had the tares been wheat at any time, even from the seed? or the children of the wicked one at any time the children of God?

Is the Apostle James to be rebuked as appealing to *sight* rather than to *faith*, when he saith, "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works; shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works."

I cannot help thinking that many will consider the cause a feeble one which has no stabler ground than this to rest on.

The Bishop anticipates a very natural and reasonable objection to all he had been saying concerning *faith* and *sight*—"That many would complain of his statement as an unfair representation of the case," saying, that they were ready to yield *faith* to the authority of Scripture, but that no Scripture had been advanced or shown to them, on which to rest their faith.

I think the objection a reasonable one, and I look for the answer. It is this :—

“What is asked for, as it seems, is some texts or some text in which the doctrine is expressly declared in terms. But we are not warranted by reason, or by the principles of our Church, in making our belief of any doctrine depend on our power of meeting such a demand.”

Well, I know the Bishop to be very cautious in his statements, and accurate in the language he employs ; but I confess, if neither texts nor text could be produced, which separately or conjointly contained the doctrine taught, I should be slow to receive it. “To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to the Word,” &c.

But the Bishop avails himself of the clause in the Article which adds to “whatsoever is read therein,” the words “or may be *proved thereby*,” and adduces the doctrine of the Trinity as an example of the latter, concluding his statement thus :—

“And I think in what is gone before it has been shown that the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration follows from two propositions, both of which may be themselves proved by *most certain warrants of Holy Scripture*. One of these propositions is, that infant baptism is of divine institution ; and the other, that the new birth spoken of by the Lord takes place in baptism.”

I trust my reader is now fully aware that no such conclusion is warranted from such premises, even if proven—that there is a fatal omission, which ignores conditions necessary to connect the outward and visible sign with the inward and spiritual grace.

The Bishop concludes this part of his “Plea,” saying—

“I began by attempting to prove both these propositions at length ; and as I cannot now discover any defect in the proof then given which needs to be supplied, I will only refer to it.”

Let not the reader be weary of statements and counter statements. Errors oft repeated, if suffered to pass uncontradicted, at length come to be accepted as established truths. The Bishop began by undertaking to prove infant baptism to be *the institution of Christ*. He soon passed over to *divine institution*, as a synonymous title. It was proved to be the latter, if so proved at all, by the parallelism instituted between the analogous rites of the two dispensations. The rite of the former having been adminis-

tered to infants, it was inferred that the *Jew* would likewise administer to infants the corresponding rite in the new dispensation. Christ gave no special command respecting it.

The Bishop next assumes that the conversation in the third of John had reference to Christian baptism—an assumption I proved to be questionable ; and because water and the Spirit are joined in that statement, he assumes that water and the Spirit are necessarily and inseparably joined in infant baptism—although allowedly not so in adult baptism—an assumption not warranted by Scripture, nor confirmed by experience ; and unsupported, or rather contradicted, by the analogy of the corresponding rite under the former dispensation.

Therefore, I do not accept his conclusions, because I believe them to be at variance with reason, experience, and analogy, and with the testimony of the Word of God.—I hold that they are neither contained therein nor proved thereby ; and therefore not to be required of any man to be believed as an article of faith.

The controversy might here be brought to a close, and the reader allowed to reach his own conclusion as to the side on which truth is found. But some further questions are raised in the “Plea,” which it may not seem expedient to leave unnoticed.

I have no occasion to dwell on what the Bishop says with reference to the “*charitable hypothesis*.” Such as accept the teaching of our Church on the question of infant baptism will not find themselves under any obligation to adopt this hypothesis, when using the Baptismal Service, “in any other form or to any greater extent than in the other services of the Church.”

When profession is made of the *conditions* required in order to baptism, the minister accepts the profession, not undertaking to judge of its sincerity ; “the principle,” as the Bishop tells us, “upon which the Apostles speak of and to the members of the different Churches to which their epistles are addressed.”

Under the present condition of the Church, wherein the tares and the wheat are growing up together, none other, which would harmonize with Scripture, could be adopted, or safely carried out.

All the Services of the Church are framed on this principle, the Baptismal Service included, and the same rule extends to all.

It is otherwise with the Bishop's theory of infant baptism. This is encumbered with much more serious difficulties and objections; upon which I cannot now enter.

I take advantage, however, of one paragraph in this part of the "Plea" to introduce an incidental item in evidence on one of the main questions in debate.

In page 36 the Bishop refers to our Lord's reception of the little children brought to Him that He might touch them, and to the use made of this incident, cited with special choice from St. Mark's account, as the Gospel in the Baptismal Service—viz, as affording encouragement "that He will likewise favourably receive this present infant, embrace him in the arms of His mercy, and give unto him the blessing of eternal life," &c. It is to be regretted that the Bishop does not quote the remaining part of the Exhortation, which bears directly upon the present controversy. It thus proceeds:—"Wherefore we, being thus persuaded of the good will of our heavenly Father towards this infant, declared by His Son Jesus Christ; and nothing doubting but that He *favourably alloweth* this *charitable work* of *ours* in bringing this infant to His holy baptism, let us," &c.

I pause here, and appeal to the judgment of any unbiassed mind, whether this language is fairly consistent with the assumption that infant baptism had been instituted by Christ Himself? If the Reformers believed this, would they not have adduced it as an argument for infant baptism, superseding all others? Would they have sought *encouragement* for that for which authority could be claimed? Would they have appealed to this incident as the expression of "the Father's good will?" Would they have said that He "*favourably alloweth*" this act—which act is further called "this *charitable work* of *ours*?" With what propriety could it be so called if it had been simply an act in obedience to the institution of Christ?

These are questions which seem to me to admit of no satisfactory solution but the one—namely, that our Reformers did not rest infant baptism on most certain warrants of Holy Scripture, still less maintain that it was the institution of Christ, but believed, as is expressed in the xxviii Article, that it was "in any wise to be retained as most agreeable with the institution of Christ."

From many other difficulties and objections which might possibly be considered to stand in the way of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, as stated by the Bishop, he selects two :—

“The first of these is the difficulty which many feel in receiving the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, under the impression that it is incompatible with the doctrines of grace. If this could be shown to be the case, and that so we must choose between them, as we cannot hold both, I should certainly let go the former, and hold fast to the latter. For, if by the doctrines of grace, I am to understand *the wholesome and very comfortable doctrine, that we are justified by Faith only, that is, that we are counted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by Faith, and not for our own works or deservings*, and the doctrines connected therewith, I think we have far more numerous and conclusive Scripture authorities for the doctrines of grace than for the doctrine of baptismal regeneration.”

What hope might not these words inspire in the hearts of the sanguine ! Hope doomed, alas ! to painful disappointment. For such must soon come to learn that “justification by faith only,” may be held, and has often been held, in such wise, as to consist with the denial of the doctrines, called distinctively and technically “the doctrines of grace.”

I am not about to enter on this subject, and happily I have no necessity to do so. I possess the advantage of being able to appeal to the standards of our own Church, and place beside the Bishop's views of baptismal regeneration the doctrines contained in her Seventeenth Article.

In this Article are distinctly and distinctively enunciated the doctrines of predestination to life, election, and preservation, or ultimate attainment to that eternal life, of all the elect of God. These are the doctrines technically known as the doctrines of grace.

Can these be reconciled with the doctrine of the regeneration of every infant baptized ? seeing it cannot be affirmed of all such that they attain to eternal life.

Perhaps the Bishop will answer—“But I have nowhere said that all baptized children are *elect* or *predestinated to everlasting life*.” He does say, however, that all baptized children are regenerated and born again of the Spirit, or “made sons of God by adoption :” and the Article affirms that all such “at length by God's mercy attain to everlasting felicity.” Both cannot be true.

Again : our Church Catechism limits the office of the Holy Ghost in the work of sanctification to the elect of God ; thus :—

“First, I believe in God the Father, who made me and all the world. Secondly, in God the Son, who redeemed me and all mankind. Thirdly, in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me and *all the elect people of God.*”

Here we observe how the circles of grace narrow as we ascend.

First : The grace of creation embraces all creatures.

Secondly : The grace of redemption embraces all mankind.

And lastly : The grace of sanctification embraces the elect only. None, according to this teaching of our Church, are the subjects of the Holy Spirit's sanctifying grace or power, save the elect people of God.

But regeneration is the beginning or first step in sanctification ; therefore none are the subjects of regeneration, but the elect people of God.

How may this be reconciled with the Bishop's views ?

After the passage immediately before cited from the “Plea,” comes the following :—

“But I am happy to believe that there is no inconsistency between them, so that we may not honestly hold both. And even those who are unable to see this distinctly ought, I think, if only they be modest men, to find quite enough to satisfy them that it must be so, in the undoubted fact that from the beginning of the Reformation the most decided and enlightened supporters of the doctrines of grace, including many, if not most, of those who were God's chief instruments in restoring those doctrines to the Church, were also among the firmest supporters of the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration.”

The Bishop here appeals to authority in support of his own conclusion, and, still more, employs the *argumentum ad vericundiam*—that is, an appeal to our modesty against questioning a conclusion supported by such authority.

I do not think that either course was open to him.

It would not be difficult, though it might be troublesome, to adduce evidence from the writings of the Reformers contradicting the statement of the Bishop. (Any one desirous to see a summary of such may find it in Dean Goode's volume on “The Effects of Infant Baptism,” wherein strong passages are cited from the writings of the Reformers and the standards of their time, in opposition to the Bishop's views.) But this would be to carry the

controversy into another field, and a field not open, as it seems to me, to the author of the "Plea from THE BIBLE, AND THE BIBLE ALONE, for the Doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration."

We have indeed an authorized expression of our Reformers' views, to which we have subscribed, in our Articles, Formularies, and Homilies. But I have already pointed out the inconsistency of the Bishop's views with some of the most precise doctrinal statements in these.

And as I do not think this former course was open to the Bishop, neither do I think that those who question the consistency of the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration with the doctrines of grace, are open to the reflection of not being "modest men," even on the supposition advanced by him.

There is, however, a statement in a note which comes more properly within the range of this controversy, and demands a reply.

Having affirmed in the text "that these eminent men saw no inconsistency between the doctrines of grace and the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration," in a note subjoined the Bishop says:—

"And this seems to have been the view of an earlier maintainer of the doctrines of grace. For St. Paul, in a passage which is intended to magnify the grace of God in the salvation of sinners, introduces the instrumentality of baptism in the work, apparently without any apprehension that its free grace is thereby impaired: 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing [the laver] of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.' (Titus iii. 5.)"

Before the Scripture here advanced can be appositely applied to the question in hand, it must first be satisfactorily shown to have had reference to infant baptism.

Secondly, it must be clearly ascertained that the Apostle intended, by the words here used, to set forth the outward and visible sign, and the inward and spiritual grace.

And lastly, that the Apostle taught, either here or elsewhere, that through the administration and reception of the outward rite, the inward and spiritual grace was, without conditions, conveyed to every baptized infant.

Only on the satisfactory establishment of these premises might such an inference as the Bishop educes from the text be legitimately drawn.

But a shorter process than this will suffice to dispel all delusion about the matter.

In the Apostolic Epistles the sign is constantly put for the thing signified, as was customary with "*the old doctors*," yet never is the sign represented as the sole and sufficient cause of the inward and spiritual grace. Contrariwise, the inward and spiritual grace is ascribed constantly to other instrumentality—to the Word of God—as its efficient cause. Thus, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, *by the Word of God*, which liveth and abideth for ever." (1 Peter i. 23.) And again—"Of His own will begat He us *with the Word of truth*." (James i. 18.) And again—"That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water *by the Word*." (Eph. v. 26.) While to baptism is regeneration never ascribed as its efficient cause. Paul says to the Corinthians—"I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius. And I baptized also the household of Stephanus : besides, I know not whether I baptized any other." (1 Cor. i. 14, 16.) Yet says he afterwards to the same Church—"Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers : for *in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel*." (1 Cor. iii. 15.) It was not, therefore, in or through, or by baptism, that these children of God had been begotten, but in Christ Jesus, *through the Gospel of God*.

Paul accounted his calling to be a higher one than that of administering the outward rite of baptism, as appears from his words immediately after those quoted above. "For," saith he, "Christ sent me, *not to baptize*, but to preach the Gospel." And forthwith he ascribes to the Gospel the power through the instrumentality of which the Spirit of God works unto salvation—"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God."

It is evident, therefore, that Paul never intended the words in his Epistle to Titus to be understood of, or applied to the administration of the rite of baptism.

Doubtless his practice everywhere was the same as at Corinth. The administration of the rite of baptism he would commit to other and junior hands, while he devoted himself to the grand object of his mission, namely, the preaching of the Gospel of

Christ. To do this, he tells us, Christ had sent him, not to baptize.

So the Lord Himself preached the Gospel of His kingdom, and committed the work of baptism to His disciples. (John iv. 2.)

It is to me, now, towards the close of a lengthened ministry which I have been allowed to fulfil, no special cause of comfort that I have baptized many. But it is a source of unspeakable thankfulness, and of continual thanksgiving to God, that there are not a few—some already gathered to their home, and some still living witnesses for the truth on the earth—of whom I may say with the Apostle, "What is my hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? for ye are our glory and joy." (1 Thess. ii. 19, 20.)

I have no need to advert to the Bishop's second difficulty.

And now I have done. I have relieved my mind from the obligation which moved me to speak; and I send forth what I have written, committing it to Him whose acceptance and blessing I seek. It is not indeed unaccompanied with an after-thought of regret, that I should have been engaged in combating the statements of one, who, until this change, had been looked upon as a tower of strength to what is called, sometimes by way of distinction, and sometimes as a term of depreciation, *Evangelical* truth.

But Truth herself needs no name, no towers of strength, for her defence. She is independent, one, and alone—immutable, invincible, and eternal. The controversies which continually rage around her spring from our ignorance—ignorance of her nature and essence. And this, again, is the fruit of the moral darkness consequent on the Fall. Without light from above we cannot see Truth, so as to admire and embrace her. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." A new nature must be implanted, a new birth from above, before he can discern, and with the heart believe, the things of God; even as He, who is the Truth, Himself said to the Jewish ruler, "Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God."